

may be more the matter of biography than of an introduction to a volume of philosophy.

Richard Terry. *Poetry and the Making of the English Literary Past: 1660–1781*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. xii + 354 pp. \$72.00. Review by JAMES FITZMAURICE, NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY.

Poetry and the Making of the English Literary Past asserts that its central project is an examination of the notion of English literature in the long eighteenth century. That notion is neither unambiguous nor uniform, and it lurks behind various labels including “*belles lettres*” and “poesy.” Nevertheless, the idea of English literature that emerges from the book is not altogether unfamiliar. English literature presupposes the selection of a group of valued imaginative texts, including representatives from earlier times. As might be imagined, Richard Terry devotes a good deal of space to canon formation. His approach combines a judicious amount of theory with a good deal of attention paid to what he takes to be important agents influencing the canon: anthologies, biographical dictionaries, and school curricula.

Terry begins by looking at the belief that “literature” was an invention of the “mid- to late eighteenth century” and at the consequence of that belief, that “the application of the term [literature] to writings earlier . . . constitutes an unwarrantable anachronism.” He has in mind, of course, Eagleton’s widely read *Literary Theory*, along with books by others like Alvin Kernan and Douglas Lane Patey. Terry is meticulous in observing the meanings of words at various points in time and often describes semantic shift, so it is no surprise when he asserts that the idea of literature existed within the meanings of other terms earlier than 1750 and that discussions of this idea are not necessarily anachronistic.

Less interesting for me than his arguments with those who theorize literary history broadly is Terry’s dealing, chapter by chapter, with a set of specific topics related to his enterprise. In one chapter, for instance, he offers a close examination of the relationship

between literary fame and dictionaries of authorial biography. He is most interested in William Winstanley's *Lives of the Most Famous English Poets* (1687), though he also covers a host of other compilers including Thomas Fuller (*Abel Redivivus*, 1651), Edward Phillips (*Theatrum Poetarum*, 1675), Giles Jacob (*Poetical Register*, 1719), and Elizabeth Cooper (*Muses Library*, 1737). The business of selection for such people was complicated, Terry says, by the influence of the tradition of "worthies," in which biographers included "meritorious individuals" who had led morally exemplary lives (82). The difficulty arises, according to Terry, "because writers, perhaps, more than any other category of persons, tend to be valued for their creations rather than their deeds [and thus] the employment of worthies-style conventions might seem somewhat inapt and mistaken." It is no small irony, which Terry points out in another chapter, that Katherine Philips became famous because she was taken to be a modest woman who did not seek fame for her writing. Ben Jonson, on the other hand, published his *Works* (1616) so as to shape his own posthumous reputation, leaving out *Bartholomew Fair* for whatever reason. As if the situation were not worried enough, the word "fame," Terry says, shifted in meaning away from "accolade conferred by posterity" and towards "modern ideas of 'public profile' and 'celebrity status'" (91).

A chapter which treats Johnson's *Works of the Poets* (1779-1781) continues the connection between literary canon and biography. Many will be startled to learn that a "cartel of booksellers" and not Johnson was responsible for the choice of fifty-one of the entries, while Johnson himself only picked five. *Works* was followed by the much more important *Lives*, but *Lives* stands "on the foundation of a great deal of earlier biographical endeavour" rather than on "original research" (226). *Lives* is, however, more skeptical and more apt to discriminate between sources than are other such collections, and it owes a great deal to Johnson's self-conscious decision to include vivid anecdotes, as with the story of the death of Otway. Otway, destitute and in a "rage of hunger," choked to death on a piece of bread. Terry sees *Works* and *Lives* taken together as a "project" that was attacked on the one hand for being indiscrimi-

nate in inclusion (*Works*) and on the other for being overly zealous in criticism (*Lives*).

Other chapters deal with literature as it finds its way into the curricula of schools, Dryden's sense of literary tradition, the canon of literature by women, and the opposition between classical and gothic models for English literature. Terry's achievement is in part encyclopedic, for he discusses a great many books and in so doing creates something like one of the dictionaries that he describes. Fortunately, he does a fine job of tying his material together. He subordinates well and is neither indiscriminate in inclusion nor overly zealous in criticism. He may miss a book or two, and I was surprised not to see Horace Walpole's *Royal and Noble Authors* among his biographical dictionaries. He also is perhaps a little off base when he says that he hopes he has been successful in changing the view that the eighteenth century is characterized by its suppression of women's literary voices. Many would say that there was plenty of suppression but that significant numbers of women managed to overcome it. These, however, are small problems. *Poetry and the Making of the English Literary Past* is both an important study of literature as an idea and a pleasant read. It is at the same time a serious and reliable reference work, to which I expect to return from time to time.

John Manning: *The Emblem*. London: Reaktion, 2002. ix + 398 pp. + 150 illus. \$35.00. Review by WILLIAM E. ENGEL.

John Manning is well known to scholars working on the connection between poetry and the visual arts. Here at last is the culmination of decades of his research and ruminations, the result of his careful scholarship and irrepressible jocundity. This book is one of the most provocative and substantial books on literary criticism and art to appear in a long time, and it is destined to be a pacesetter for years to come.

Manning begins his study of the emblem by situating its origin, as near as can be determined, in the festive, coterie environment of